Decline in Number of Passenger in Shatabdi Express

†1453.SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a substantial decline in the number of Shatabdi Express passengers;

(b) if so, whether Government are taking any step to increase their number; and

(c) the number of passengers who travelled in Shatabdi Express trains during the last year and how much this number is lesser than the passengers who travelled during the preceding two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Fatuha-Islampur B.G. Project

1454. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Fatuha-Islampur B.G. project was approved by the Railway Board at a cost of Rs. 49.50 crores despite the fact that the project was not recommended by Eastern Railway Administration on the basis of traffic appreciation and rate of return;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the status of this project and how much expenditure has been incurred thereon, till date; and

(c) by when this project would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) The project has been taken up on consideration of development of backward areas, linkage of Buddhist centres and restoration of facility to the people of the area. The earthwork and bridge works are in progress. The likely expenditure by 31.3.2002 is Rs. 42.99 crores. This section is presently targeted for completion by 31.3.2003.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.